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FIFTH COMMITTEE
68th meeting
held on
Friday, 13 September 1996
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 68th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 5.40 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued)

1. Ms. INCERA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, reiterated the proposal she had made at the preceding meeting that the Committee should recommend for adoption by the General Assembly a draft decision reaffirming General Assembly resolutions 50/214, 50/230 and 50/231, and requesting the Secretary-General to defer any action regarding involuntary separation of the staff in the context of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 until the Assembly had considered the Secretary-General's report as requested by resolution 50/214.

2. Mr. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, regretted the fact that the Committee had failed to reach a consensus during the informal consultations. The European Union regarded as highly unsatisfactory the procedure of introducing a resolution which was not based on a report from the Secretary-General or the Advisory Committee. Referring to rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, he requested that no action should be taken unless the draft resolution submitted by the Group of 77 had been circulated to all delegations as an official document in all official languages at least 24 hours prior to discussions thereon.

3. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that it was her delegation's understanding that despite the submission of the draft resolution, it was still possible to continue negotiations, as provided for by the last paragraph of rule 120 of the rules of procedure, in order to find a consensus.

4. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) said that while he supported the draft decision, he regretted that the Committee had failed to reach agreement in the informal meetings. He therefore appealed to all sides to be flexible in order to arrive at a consensus and thus avoid putting the matter to a vote.

5. Mr. HANSON (Canada) said he hoped that when the Committee reconvened it would not be necessary to proceed to a vote on the issue. His delegation remained concerned that the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly should take no action which would interfere in relations between employer and employees in contravention of the staff rules and regulations and of the Charter of the United Nations. Since the proposal had now been formally submitted, his delegation formally wished to reiterate its request that legal advice should be rendered on the point at issue and looked forward to receiving that advice.

6. Ms. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that it was regrettable that the Committee had failed to reach agreement on the draft decision. She shared the concerns expressed with respect to the 24-hour rule. In that regard, the immediate translation and circulation of the draft decision to all delegations the following day would ensure that the Committee fully complied with the time limits provided for by the relevant rules of procedure of the General Assembly when it reconvened the following Monday to consider the draft text.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.